(b) The declaration of any road as a National Highway depends not only on the consideration that it runs in a particular State but on several other considerations including traffic needs, inter-se priority on all India basis and availability of resources.

(c) It is premature to indicate any time frame for further declaration of National Highways.

Registration of sea going vessels

2357. SHRIV. HANUMANTHARAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Director-General of Shipping is the sole authority for registration of sea going vessels;

(b) if so, what is the meaning of registration;

(c) the time taken by the Director-General, Shipping to register ships and other vessels;

(d) the number of such applications which are presently pending with the Director-General, Shipping in Mumbai; and

(e) the details of other applications pending for more than fifteen days with the Director-General, Shipping from shipping or other maritime vessels, fishing trawlers and barges, with names of all such companies?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) As per Section 24 of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, at each of the ports of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, the Principal Officer of the Mercantile Marine Department and at other major ports, the Surveyor in Charge, Mercantile Marine Department function as Registrar of Indian ships at that port and egister ocean going ships, fishing trawlers and non-propelled barges under the Merchant Shipping act, 1958 and the Coasting Vessel Act, 1838. The Director- General maintains the central registry for records for the vessels registered under Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 only. The in land vessels and the fishing trawlers are registered by the State authorities and the Maritime Boards of the Coastal States concerned.

(b) Registration of a vessel in India bestows the privileges and obligation mentioned under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 as amended from time to time. In accordance with Part V of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 as amended, every Indian ship above 15 tons Net and employed in navigation on the coast of India, fitted with mechanical means of propulsion is required to be registered under the Act.

(c) The Registrar as referred to in para (a) above registers Indian ships at the relevant Port. The process of registration is generally completed in five working days subject to the vessel having required documentation.

(d) and (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Action plan for SSIs

2358. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the major problems faced by the small scale sector alongwith the comprehensive action taken by the Central and State Government for promotion and development of small scale industries; and

(b) the details of the plans of action to provide adequate credit to small scale sector to make them competitive?

THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The major problems faced by the small scale industries (SSIs) sector relate to lack of timely and adequate availability of credit, obsolete technology, infrastructure bottlenecks, marketing constraints, etc. For the promotion and development of the SSIs, the Government provides fiscal and credit support, infrastructure development support, incentives for technology upgradation, marketing support, etc. The measures taken to provide adequate credit to the SSI sector include enhancement in composite loan limit from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore, raising of project cost limit under National Equity Fund (NEF) Scheme from Rs. 25 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh, enhancement of eligible loan limit under Credit Guarantee Scheme from Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 25 lakh, advice to banks to adopt interest rate band of 2% above and below prime lending rates, providing collateral free loan upto Rs. 25 lakh to SSI units having good track record, setting up of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)